

This week NCHS released a Data Brief spotlighting recent national trends in twin births. Back in the early 1980s, following years of relative stability, twin births began to climb in the United States, rising 79% from 1980 to 2014. In 1980, one in every 53 births was a twin, compared with one in every 29 births in 2014. The increase in twin births over more than three decades was widespread, occurring across age, race and Hispanic-origin groups, and in all 50 U.S. states.

However, the twin birth rate declined 4% during 2014–2018, to the lowest rate in more than a decade: 32.6 twins per 1,000 total live births in 2018. One in every 31 births was a twin in 2018. The number of births in twin deliveries declined an average of 2% per year from 2014 through 2018, dropping to 123,536 births in 2018. While twin birth rates declined among mothers age 30 and over, the largest declines occurred among older mothers age 40 and over. Most of the decline in the twin birth rate was attributed to a 7% decline among non-Hispanic white mothers over this period, as the rate remained essentially unchanged among non-Hispanic black and Hispanic mothers. 17 states saw declines in the twin birth rate while only 3 states saw an increase.